

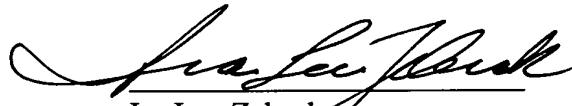
REMARKS

This amendment is filed concurrently with a divisional application filed under 37 C.F.R. § 1.53(b)(2), which claims the benefit of the filing date of U.S. Patent Application No. 09/583,599 pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 120.

Please consider this Preliminary Amendment prior to calculating the filing fee. In anticipation of your consideration of this Preliminary Amendment, the total number of claims specified on the Fee Transmittal is 20 and the number of independent claims is one.

It is not believed at this time that any additional fee is due. As a precaution, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge to Deposit Account No. 02-2865 any additional fee required by this submission.

Respectfully submitted,



The BOC Group, Inc.
575 Mountain Avenue
Murray Hill, NJ 07974
Phone: 908-771-6469
Fax: 908-771-6159

Ira Lee Zebrak
Registration No. 31,147
Attorney for Applicant(s)
Date: April 14, 2004